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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: GEORGIA RECALLS AMBASSADOR, ASKS FOR HELP IN
PROTESTING RUSSIAN FIGHTERS

REF: 1170

Classified By: Ambassador John F. Tefft for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Georgia Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Vashadze called in the Ambassadors representing the Western Friends of the Secretary General to the MFA on July 11 to ask for Western support in the UNSC and OSCE regarding July 8 overflights by Russian fighter planes over South Ossetia. The Russian MFA admitted July 10 that Russia conducted the flights. Deputy FM Vashadze said Georgia recalled its Ambassador to Russia the same day to protest the flagrant violation of Georgia's sovereignty. He said the overflights were timed to coincide with Secretary Rice's July 9-10 visit.

Vashadze said the only such example he could recall of a nation openly admitting it had violated another nation's sovereignty occurred when "Israel bombed Osirak." He said he believes Russia's next provocative step will be to establish representative offices in Sukhumi next week.

¶2. (C) Vashadze said the incursion ended any chance for a possible summit between Presidents Saakashvili and Medvedev this summer. The Georgians believe PM Putin is continuing to direct Russia's policy toward Georgia. Recent reports of Russian casualties in Ingushetia led Vashadze to believe a wider war in the Northern Caucasus is possible. Vashadze said "any armed conflict would be the end of Georgia as we know it." (Note: On July 11 Interfax carried a story claiming Nika Rurua, Deputy Chairman of Parliament's Defense and National Security Committee, said Georgia would shoot down any future Russian intruders into Georgian airspace. End note.) Ultimately, Vashadze believes Russia is increasing tensions so the Europeans will oppose MAP for Georgia. He claimed that the postponement of MAP in April had only resulted in Russia's "military aggression and the threat of all-out war." Vashadze said the "only medicine for all this conflict is MAP in December."

¶3. (C) The Ambassador told the group the U.S. will likely support Georgia in both the UNSC and OSCE, but that he understood UNSC consideration would have to wait until next week after Friday's consideration of the Zimbabwe question.

¶4. (C) The French Ambassador said "it was no coincidence" the July 8 violation of Georgia's airspace took place the same day the OSCE Ambassadors met in Kurta, South Ossetia. He said Georgian FM Tkeshelashvili will meet French FM Bernard Kouchner next week, and this timely visit should show French support to the process. The German Ambassador thanked Georgia for its continuing restraint and encouraged the government to maintain it. She said Russia's actions strengthen Georgia's position in Europe and "Western capitals are coming together on this" and support Georgia. She confirmed that "we will never let Russia influence our decision" on MAP for Georgia. She noted that German Special Envoy Hans-Dieter Lucas will arrive in Tbilisi this weekend to express Germany's high-level support regarding the conflict regions.

